

Claims:

1. A cartridge containing one or more beverage ingredients and being formed from substantially air- and water-impermeable materials, the cartridge comprising or being adapted to have formed therein at least one inlet for the introduction of an aqueous medium into the cartridge and at least one outlet, characterised in that flow of the aqueous medium through the cartridge is generally in an inward direction from the at least one inlet to the at least one outlet.
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2. A cartridge as claimed in claim 1 wherein the flow of the aqueous medium through the cartridge is generally in a radially inward direction.
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3. A cartridge as claimed in claim 2 wherein the cartridge comprises a storage chamber containing the one or more beverage ingredients.
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4. A cartridge as claimed in claim 3 wherein the storage chamber comprises at least one inlet which is directed inwardly.
- 25 5. A cartridge as claimed in claim 4 wherein the cartridge is disc-shaped.
6. A cartridge as claimed in claim 5 wherein an inlet for introduction of the aqueous medium into the cartridge is located at or near a periphery of the cartridge.
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7. A cartridge as claimed in claim 6 wherein the cartridge further comprises a circumferential manifold separated from the storage chamber by a wall, wherein the wall comprises a plurality of inwardly directed inlets.

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8. A cartridge as claimed in claim 7 wherein the plurality of inwardly directed inlets are radially inwardly directed.

10 9. A cartridge as claimed in claim 8 wherein the cartridge comprises an opening through which the one or more beverage ingredients can be filled into the storage chamber, the opening being closed by a lid, wherein the lid is pierceable in use to accommodate an inflow of an aqueous medium into the cartridge and the lid is pierceable in use to accommodate an outflow of beverage formed from interaction of the aqueous medium and the one or more beverage ingredients in the storage chamber.

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10. A cartridge as claimed in claim 9 wherein the circumferential manifold is located at a periphery of the cartridge.

25 11. A cartridge as claimed in claim 10 wherein the wall comprises 3 to 40 openings.

12. A cartridge as claimed in claim 11 wherein the wall comprises 3 to 5 openings.

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13. A cartridge as claimed in claim 11 wherein the wall comprises 35 to 40 said openings.
14. A cartridge as claimed in claim 13 wherein each opening has a cross-sectional area of 0.45 to 0.65 mm².

15. A cartridge as claimed in claim 14 wherein the cartridge comprises an inlet chamber in communication with the circumferential manifold.

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16. A cartridge as claimed in claim 15 wherein the inlet chamber communicates with the circumferential manifold via one or more apertures formed in a wall of the inlet chamber.

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17. A cartridge as claimed in claim 16 further comprising a filter disposed between the storage chamber and at least a part of an undersurface of a top of the cartridge, one or more passages being formed between the filter and the top of the cartridge, which one or more passages communicate with the outlet whereby a beverage flow path linking the inlet to the outlet passes upwardly through the filter into the one or more passages.

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18. A cartridge as claimed in claim 17, wherein the cartridge comprises an outer member and an inner member conjoined on assembly with the outer member, the inner member defining the outlet of the cartridge.

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19. A cartridge as claimed in claim 18 wherein the inner member comprises a discharge spout defining the outlet.
20. A cartridge as claimed in claim 19 wherein the inlet and/or outlet is covered by a substantially air- and water-impermeable material prior to the formation, in use, of the inlet and/or outlet in the cartridge.
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21. A cartridge as claimed in claim 20 wherein the inlet and/or outlet is covered by a substantially air- and water-impermeable laminate.
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22. A cartridge as claimed in claim 21 wherein the outer member and/or inner member are formed from polypropylene.
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23. A cartridge as claimed in claim 22 wherein the outer member and/or inner member is formed by injection moulding.
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24. A plurality of cartridges, as claimed in claim 23, wherein the percentage yield of the beverage produced from the one or more beverage ingredients contained in the cartridges is consistent to within 1.0 standard deviations.
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